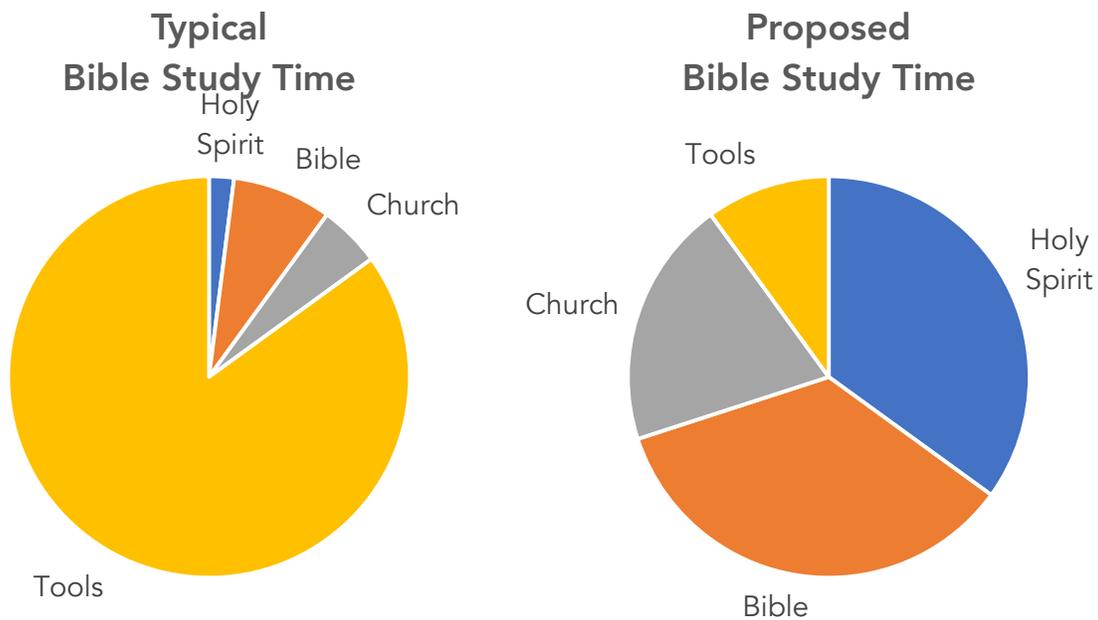


Romans

Do Not Cause Another to Stumble ([Romans 14:13-23](#))

Introduction

A gentle review: **Did we do this?** Spend more time with God and His Word than with anyone and anything else.



Our approach each week will be REAP (read, explain, apply, personalize).

Here's our outline of the book of [Romans](#) (summarized from the ESV's outline):

- ✓ Paul's Introduction & Righteousness Introduced ([1:1-17](#)) (three weeks)
- ✓ Righteous Wrath ([1:18-3:20](#)) (six weeks)
- ✓ Saving Righteousness ([3:21-4:25](#)) (three weeks)
- ✓ Righteous Freedom ([5:1-8:39](#)) (11 weeks)
- ✓ Righteousness → Jews ([9:1-11:36](#)) (eight weeks)
- 6. Righteous Living ([12:1-15:13](#)) (September to October) (nine weeks)
- 7. Paul's Closing ([15:14-16:23](#)) (November to early December) (five weeks)
- 8. Righteousness Summarized ([16:25-27](#)) (December & wrap up) (two weeks)

Today's text ([Romans 14:13-23](#)) is the seventh part of this major section, and the second week of a three-week span focusing on our relationship to weaker brothers and sisters.

A Living Sacrifice

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Gifts of Grace

3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Marks of the True Christian

9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. 17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." 20 To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Submission to the Authorities

1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist

will incur judgment. **3** For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, **4** for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. **5** Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. **6** For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. **7** Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Fulfilling the Law Through Love

8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. **9** For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

11 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. **12** The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. **13** Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. **14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Do Not Pass Judgment on One Another (14:1-12)

1 As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. **2** One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. **3** Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. **4** Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

5 One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. **6** The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. **7** For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. **8** For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. **9** For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; 11 for it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall confess to God.”

12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Read: Do Not Cause Another to Stumble (14:13-23)

13 Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. 14 I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. 15 For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. 16 So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. 17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. 19 So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

20 Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. 21 It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. 22 The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. 23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

Explain: Do Not Cause Another to Stumble (14:13-23)

Bible study is asking and answering questions about the text. Let's ask some questions.

Are there any literary/structural observations?

Paul continues this larger section of Romans by showing us more of what it looks like to live our righteousness, but this section is the second in a three-week span focusing on our relationship to weaker brothers and sisters.

Note: today's text can be confusing since we are not Jewish (clean/unclean doesn't and never did apply to us), but a helpful perspective might be to place ourselves in the weaker brother's shoes.

What do the words mean?

13 Therefore let us not pass judgment [*krino*; present active subjunctive; distinguish, decide, try, condemn, punish, avenge, conclude, condemn, damn, decree, determine, esteem, judge, sue, ordain, call in question, sentence, think; same word used many times in **Romans 2-3; 14**] **on one another any longer, but rather decide** [*krino*; aorist active imperative] **never to put** [present active infinitive; same word used in **Romans 4:17; 9:33**] **a stumbling block** [stump, occasion of apostasy, offence, stumbling block, stumbling stone; same word used in **Romans 9:32, 33**] **or hindrance** [*skandalon*; snare, occasion to fall, offence, thing that offends, stumbling-block; same word used in **Romans 9:33; 11:9**] **in the way of a brother** [*adelphos*]. **14 I know** [perfect passive (Robertson) indicative] **and am persuaded** [perfect middle indicative; convinced, assented, rely, agreed, assured, believed, have confidence in, contented, make friend, obeyed, persuaded, trusted, yielded; same word used in **Romans 2:8, 19; 8:38**] **in the Lord Jesus that nothing** [know what this means in the Greek? Nothing (same word used in **Romans 8:1**] **is unclean** [common, shared by all or several, profane, defiled, unclean, unholy] **in itself, but it is** [present middle infinitive] **unclean** [common, shared by all or several, profane, defiled, unclean, unholy; same word used earlier in **Romans 14:14**] **for anyone who thinks** [*logizomai*; present middle participle; taken inventory, estimated, concluded, esteemed, imputed, numbered, reasoned, reckoned; same word used in **Romans 2:3, 26; 3:28; 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24; 6:11; 8:18, 36; 9:8**] **it unclean** [common, shared by all or several, profane, defiled, unclean, unholy; same word used twice earlier in **Romans 14:14**]. **15 For if your brother** [*adelphos*] **is grieved** [*lypeo*; present middle indicative; distressed, to be sad, cause grief, grieve, be in heaviness, be sorrowful, be sorry] **by what you eat** [food, especially (ceremonial) articles allowed or forbidden by the Jewish law, meat, victuals], **you are no longer walking** [present active indicative; tread all around, walk, live, deport oneself, follow; same word used in **Romans 6:4; 8:4**] **in love** [*agape*]. **By what you eat** [food, especially (ceremonial) articles allowed or forbidden by the Jewish law, meat, victuals; same word used earlier in **Romans 14:15**], **do not destroy** [present active imperative; be destroyed fully, perish, lose, die; same word used in **Romans 2:12**] **the one for whom Christ died** [second aorist active indicative; has died off, is dead, died, lies a-dying, is slain; same word used in **Romans 5:6, 7, 8, 15; 6:2, 7, 8, 9, 10** (twice), **7:2, 3, 6, 9; 8:13, 34; 14:7, 8** (thrice), **9**]. **16 So do not let what you regard as good** [good, beneficial] **be spoken of as evil** [present passive (Robertson) imperative; vilified, spoken impiously of, blasphemed, defamed, railed on, reviled, spoken evil against; same word used in **Romans 2:24; 3:8**]. **17 For the kingdom** [royalty, rule, realm, kingdom, reign] **of God is** [present middle indicative] **not a matter of eating** [eating, food, meat] **and drinking** [drinking, draught, drink] **but of righteousness** [equity, justification, righteousness; same word used in **Romans 1:17**;

3:5, 21, 22, 25, 26; 4:3, 5, 6, 9, 11 (twice), 13, 22; 5:17, 21; 6:13, 16, 18, 19, 20; 8:10; 9:30 (twice), 31; 10:3 (twice), 4, 5, 6, 10] **and peace** [peace, prosperity, one, quietness, rest, to be set at one again; same word used in **Romans 1:7; 2:10; 3:17; 5:1; 8:6**] **and joy** [cheerfulness, calm delight, gladness, greatly, exceedingly joy (-ful, -fully, -fulness, -ous)] **in the Holy** [sacred, pure, consecrated, holy, saint; same word used in **Romans 1:2, 7; 5:5; 7:12; 8:27; 9:1; 11:16; 12:1, 13**] **Spirit** [*pneuma*]. **18 Whoever thus serves** [*douleuo*; present active participle; be a slave, be in bondage, do service; same word used in **Romans 6:6; 7:6, 25; 9:12; 12:11**] **Christ is acceptable** [fully agreeable, acceptable, well pleasing; same word used in **Romans 12:1, 2**] **to God and approved** [properly acceptable, approved, tried] **by men**. **19 So then let us pursue** [present active subjunctive; pursue, **persecute**, ensue after, given to, press toward; same word used in **Romans 9:30; 31; 12:13, 14**] **what makes for peace** [peace, prosperity, one, quietness, rest, to be set at one again; same word used in **Romans 1:7; 2:10; 3:17; 5:1; 8:6; 14:17**] **and for mutual upbuilding** [**architecture**, a structure, confirmation, building, edify (-ication, -ing)].

20 Do not, for the sake of food [food, especially (ceremonial) articles allowed or forbidden by the Jewish law, meat, victuals; same word used twice in **Romans 14:15**], **destroy** [present active imperative; to loosen down (disintegrate), **demolish**, halt for the night, destroy, dissolve, be guest, lodge, come to naught, overthrow, throw down] **the work** [works, toil, labor] **of God. Everything is indeed clean** [clean, clear, pure], **but it is wrong** [worthless, depraved, bad, evil, harm, ill, noisome, wicked; same word used in **Romans 1:30; 2:9; 3:8; 7:19, 21; 12:17** (twice), **21** (twice); **13:3, 4** (twice), **10**] **for anyone to make another stumble** [stumb, occasion of apostasy, offence, stumbling block, stumbling stone; same word used in **Romans 9:32, 33; 14:13**] **by** [*dia*] **what he eats** [present active participle; eat, devour, live; same word used earlier in **Romans 14**]. **21 It is good** [beautiful, good, valuable, virtuous, better, fair, good, honest, meet, well, worthy; same word used in **Romans 7:16, 18, 21; 12:17**] **not to eat** [second aorist active infinitive; eat, meat; same word used earlier in **Romans 14**] **meat** [butcher's meat, flesh] **or drink** [*pino*; second aorist active infinitive; imbibe, drink] **wine or do anything that causes your brother** [*adelphos*] **to stumble** [present active indicative; strike at, surge against (as water), stub on, trip up, beat upon, dash, stumble at; same word used in **Romans 9:32**]. **22 The faith** [*pistis*; persuasion, moral conviction, reliance upon, constancy in profession, the system of religious truth, assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity] **that you have** [present active indicative], **keep** [present active imperative] **between yourself and God. Blessed** [fortunate, well off, happy; same word used in **Romans 4:7, 8**] **is the one who has no reason to pass judgment** [*krino*; present active participle] **on himself for what he approves** [present active indicative; test, approve, allow, discern, examine, like, prove, try; same word used in **Romans 1:28; 2:18; 12:2**]. **23 But whoever has doubts** [present middle participle; separate thoroughly, withdraw

from, oppose, discriminate, hesitate, contend, differ, discern, doubt, judge, be partial, stagger, waver; same word used in **Romans 4:20**] **is condemned** [*katakrino*; perfect passive (Robertson) indicative; judge against, sentence, condemn, damn; same word used in **Romans 2:1; 8:3, 34**] **if he eats** [second aorist active subjunctive; eat, meat; same word used earlier in **Romans 14**], **because the eating is not from faith** [*pistis*; persuasion, moral conviction, reliance upon, constancy in profession, the system of religious truth, assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity]. **For whatever does not proceed from faith** [*pistis*; persuasion, moral conviction, reliance upon, constancy in profession, the system of religious truth, assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity] **is** [present middle indicative] **sin** [offense, sin].

Are there any repeated words?

God, unclean, faith, one, eat/eats, brother, anyone, good, longer, pass, judgment, whoever, stumble, peace, Christ, destroy

Are there any repeated topics?

Building up and tearing down and food/drink

What are some observations of the text?

13 Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. 14 I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. 15 For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. 16 So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. 17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. 19 So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

20 Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God [God is building His church in the New Testament. Our physical bodies are the fleshing out of the shadow of this thought in the Old Testament with the tabernacle and the temple—objects built with physical hands. God is building His Son's bride into a beautiful thing.]. **Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. 21 It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. 22 The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. 23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.**

Apply (What is the point?)

1. We have a **choice** (between a life of love in the Spirit and stumbling blocks)
2. God is **greater** (than opinions from last week, food and drink from this week, or anything else we can dream of in the future—because Christianity is not about our pleasure, but about His pleasure—and He is pleased when we walk in the Spirit and are known by the fruits of the Spirit)
3. **Faith** is required for life (not just for the conversion portion of salvation, but for the sanctification part too). **Maclaren: If you have any doubts, abstain.**

Personalize (What do we do with that?)

1. Choose wisely (decide ahead of time—in faith—what approach you will take)
2. Build up (not trip up) brothers (God gave us pieces to work with—things in our hands. Will we choose to build stumbling blocks or edifices for His glory?) **Mounce: Rights are to be laid aside in the interest of love**
3. Live in **faith** (*sola fide* works for sanctification as well as conversion) **Hughes: Whether we are strong or weak, we are to live as citizens of the kingdom of God focusing not on the externals, but on the elements of eternity.**

Next week: The Example of Christ (15:1-7)

1 We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. 3 For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." 4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, 6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Homework

Resources (our helps—order matters)

- Holy Spirit
- Bible: **Romans** (ESV)
- Church: bit.ly/FlemingSS
- Tools: bit.ly/romans2017

Our process

- Ask (the Holy Spirit for help)
- Read ([Romans](#))
- Talk (about [Romans](#)—bit.ly/romans2017group)
- Send (feedback to jim314@yahoo.com by Wed)

Quotes & Observations

Amy Valovcin (Hughes)

Putting on my TVA HR hat for a minute, these verses read like a good diversity and inclusion message.

We are a diverse lot—there is no doubt about that. Diversity is one of the glories of the community of Christ. But our unity is supremely glorious. Let us seek to enhance it with all that we are.

Hughes breaks the verses into four to-dos:

1. Don't be a source of stumbling
2. Live as citizens of the kingdom of God
3. Pursue that which brings mutual benefits
4. Do all we do with a clear conscience

Whether we are strong or weak, we are to live as citizens of the kingdom of God focusing not on the externals, but on the elements of eternity.

Darla Skinner (Mounce)

While freedom is a right, it is not a guide for conduct. Love serves that purpose. Rights are to be laid aside in the interest of love. That principle was firmly established by the incarnation ([Philippians 2:6-11](#)).

Jessica Norris (Kroll)

Kroll quotes Ray Stedman when comparing the strong versus the weak: We can compare this to crossing a swinging bridge over a mountain stream. Some people can run across a bridge like that even though it does not have any handrails. They are not concerned about the swaying of the bridge, or the danger of falling into the torrent below. But others are very uncertain of such a bridge. They shake and tremble; they inch along. They may even get down on their hands and knees and crawl across. But they will make it if you just give them time, if you let them set their own speed. After a few crossings they begin to pick up courage, and eventually they are able to run right across. It is like that with these moral questions. Some people cannot see themselves acting in a certain area that they have been brought up to think is wrong. As in the

case of the swinging bridge, it would be cruel for someone who had the freedom to cross boldly to take the arm of someone who was timid and force him to run across. He might even lose his balance and fall off the bridge. This is what Paul is warning about in verse 15.

After reading this passage the first thing that came to mind is that you are only as strong as your weakest link. If you wanted a strong fence then you wouldn't find the weakest link and then pour a corrosive on it to make it stronger. You instead would try to figure out a way to reinforce that link to make it as strong as the rest of your fence, chain, or whatever. As Christians, we should be building up each other with encouragement instead of placing stumbling blocks in the way because we get enough help with obstacles from the world. We are all supposed to be on the same team.

The bridge analogy really connected to me because I am terrified of heights and would be the one crawling across it, ha, ha! But I also know that there are areas that I am stronger in than others. I work with a girl who is terrified of talking to people. I'm talking breaking out in a cold sweat and hives if she has to make a phone call. At first, I thought this was really odd behavior and that maybe she is in the wrong line of work but I don't know what has happened to her to get her to the point that she is petrified to talk to people. Sometimes she is assigned to help me on massive cases that is just too much for one person and she immediately will ask that I take the phone call assignments. She literally will do anything else on that list as long as she doesn't have to talk to people. This used to really annoy me because I don't necessarily like interviewing people either but I do it because it is part of my job. Over time though I have come to accept that we are working together and if I can take that assignment from her and let her do some other task that I'm not the best at then it helps us all achieve the same goal of defending a case to the best of our team's ability. Now she may love running across bridges, I don't know but if that is ever an assignment then I will gladly let her take that task and I know she would do it without complaint.

Tim Archer (Maclaren)

Romans 14:12-23: The Limits of Liberty

Maclaren starts these verses with [verse 12](#). He reiterates that we will give an account of ourselves to God. We need to look inward at our motives and not criticizing others.

13: No Christian is blameless if he voluntarily acts so as to lay a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in another's path. Man may stumble, and not fall, and that which makes him stumble may possibly indicate a temptation to a less grave evil than that which makes him fall does. Is my liberty to be restricted by the narrow scruples of a "strait-laced" Christian? Yes. Does not that make them masters, and attach too much importance to their narrowness? No. We are flexible as long as possible and let the

weak. Brethren's scruples restrain our action. But if they insist on things indifferent as essential, a yet higher duty that that of regard to their weak consciences come in, and faithfulness to Christ limits concession to His servants.

Christians have different views of the obligation of Sunday observance; some might see no harm in playing lawn-tennis in the garden on Sunday; but if his do so scandalized, or, as Paul says, "Grieved". Christians of less advanced views, he would be sinning against the law of love if he did it.

16-18: It displays true character of Christianity, and so reflects honor on the doer.

19-20: Restricting shows the conduct contributing to peace. Concessions to the weak may help them to become strong.

22-23: The Christian is bid to be content with having his wider views or faith, that is, certainty that his liberty is in accordance with Christ's will. If you have any doubts, abstain.